

Family Group Decision Making

An In-depth Perspective of the Family Group Decision Making Conferences

Lisa Coleman and Jennifer Hays

Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to gain information from referral sources about what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM).

Narratives descriptive approach was used to gather information from referral sources about what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses of the FGDM program. A non-probabilistic availability sampling procedure was used in this study. A total of six semi-structured interviews were conducted. The researcher took the data obtained from the interviews and looked for common themes in strengths and weaknesses.

Common Strengths

- FGDM conferences bring families together
- Conference participants are allowed to voice their thoughts and opinions
- Family has decision-making ability over their family plan
- FGDM conferences list the family's strengths
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Common Weaknesses

- Not able to get professionals to attend the FGDM conferences

Discussion: From the referral sources that were interviewed, numerous strengths were listed and this can be a powerful tool for future FGDM conferences. The weaknesses that were listed by the referral sources can easily be overcome.

Lisa Coleman: Participant Satisfaction Levels with Family Group Decision Making conferences

The purpose of this study was to measure participant's satisfaction levels with the FGDM conferences that they participated in. Pre-experimental one-group post test only design was used. A non-probabilistic availability sample of all participants who have a satisfaction survey on file were used. Approximately 155 family surveys and 96 service provider surveys were used from pre-existing data.

The families were most satisfied with the building in which the conferences were held and they were least satisfied with being unfairly pressured to come to an agreement. Participants were most satisfied with the knowledge and effectiveness of the facilitator and co-facilitator's presentation. The participants were least satisfied with the facilitator and co-facilitator's respectfulness and courtesy. However, the satisfaction ratings were still high in terms of the participant's satisfaction.

Significant satisfaction differences were found between males and females in terms of their perception on the knowledge and effectiveness of the facilitator(s). Males tended to be less satisfied than females.

Service providers were most satisfied with being able to express their point of view and they were least satisfied with the conferences being more effective than court. Service providers were most satisfied with the facilitator and co-facilitator's ability to be respectful and courteous and least satisfied with the facilitator's knowledge and effectiveness in their presentation and the co-facilitator's ability to remain neutral at all times. However, the satisfaction ratings were still high in terms of satisfaction.

Significant differences were found for the roles of the service providers in terms of were they given enough information about the FGDM conference before it took place. Significant differences were found for the number of years the service provider had in their profession in terms of was the facility satisfactory.

Family Group Decision Making

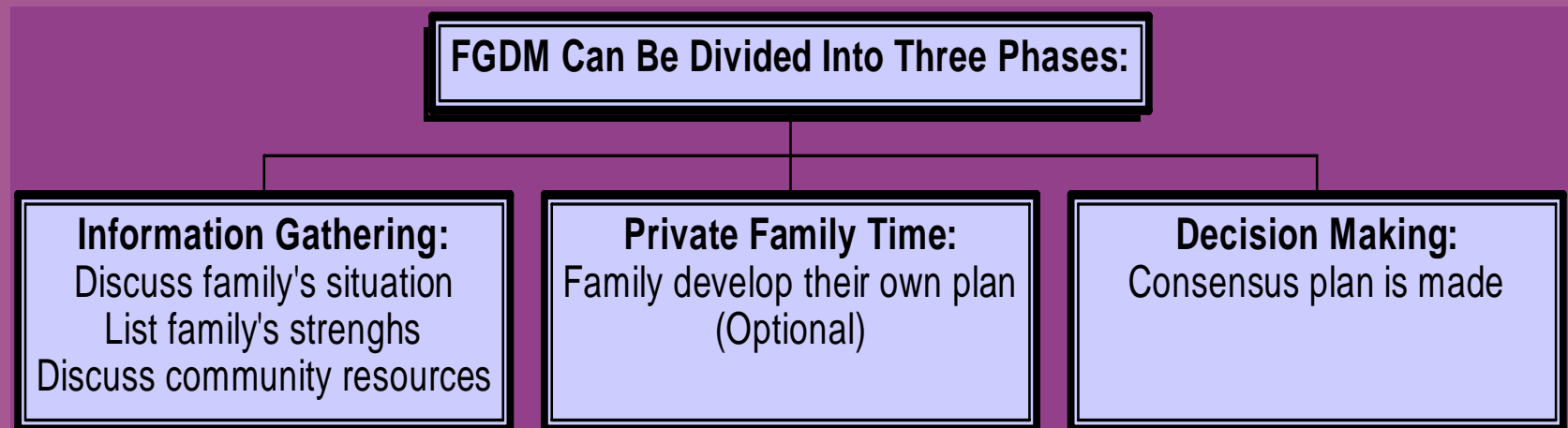


Jennifer Hays
and
Lisa Coleman

Introduction

Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) Is a Gathering of Family Members, Friends, Community, Partners, and Other Interested People Who Join Together to Improve the Care and Protection of a Specific Child or Children.

- Family strength are a focus of FGDM conferences
- Addresses all family issues of concern
- Family creates their own “family plan”
- Community resources are offered to the family



Introduction Continued...

- Purpose of Study
 - To measure family's and service provider's satisfaction levels with the FGDM conferences.
- Literature Review
 - Pennell and Burford conducted a study to see if FGDM model eliminated or reduced violence against children and adult family members.
 - Pennell and Burford found that FGDM conferences strengthened family unity and improved safety issues.
 - The goal of FGDM conferences is to change the perception about Child Protective Services.
 - The Casey Foundation found that children can remain living safely within their home environment if the family is provided with resources provided through FGDM conferences.

Importance to Social Work

- Families participate in the decision making process.
- FGDM works from a strength based perspective.
- FGDM increases the family's ability to become self determined.
- FGDM help to provide for the care and protection of children.
- All participants receive information during the FGDM process and available community resources.
- FGDM respects the participants cultural differences.
- FGDM holds participants accountable for following through on the family plan.

Quantitative Research Questions:

1. How Satisfied Were the Families With the FGDM Conference?
2. How Satisfied Were the Service Providers With the FGDM Conference?



Research Design and Sampling:

- Pre-experimental one group post test only design measuring participant satisfaction levels at the end of each FGDM conference.
- Used pre-existing data from family and service provider surveys.
- Sampling procedure: a non-probability availability sampling procedure was used.

Variables

- **Independent Variable:**

- Each FGDM conference that was held
- **Other Variables are:**
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Role of the service providers
 - Number of years in the service provider role

- **Dependent Variable:**

- family satisfaction levels
- service provider satisfaction levels

- Satisfaction Was Measured with 12 Questions on a 4 point **Likert scale** with 1 indicating strongly agree and 4 indicating strongly disagree.

- Questions related to:

- pre-conference info
- facility
- opportunity to voice opinions
- facilitator

Participants

Families

- Out of the 155 family surveys that were analyzed, 31% were males with 67.7% being female (1.3% did not report their gender).
- Most of the participants (27.1%) were between 31-40 years of age and the second largest age group (21.9%) were between 21-30 years of age.

Service Providers

- Out of 96 service provider surveys analyzed, 51% were social workers, 29.2% were other types of service providers, and 18.8% were therapists (1% did not report their role).
- Most of the service providers (26%) have been in their profession 3-5 years and 25% have been in their profession 11 or more years.

Satisfaction Levels of Families

| | N | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|----------|
| Given info | 149 | 1.72 | .761 |
| Building | 152 | 1.55 | .573 |
| Point of view | 143 | 1.60 | .877 |
| Adequate protection | 116 | 1.80 | .970 |
| Addressed concerns | 145 | 1.80 | .863 |
| Unfairly pressured | 149 | 2.26 | .734 |
| Convenient | 141 | 1.65 | .678 |

From this table, it is clear that the families were most satisfied with the building in which the conference was held. They were least satisfied with being unfairly pressured to come to an agreement.

Family Satisfaction Levels with Facilitators

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|----------------|-----|------|-----------|
| Facilitator 1a | 136 | 1.66 | .680 |
| Facilitator 1b | 138 | 1.49 | .530 |
| Facilitator 1c | 140 | 1.58 | .635 |
| Facilitator 2a | 99 | 1.57 | .574 |
| Facilitator 2b | 99 | 1.51 | .560 |
| Facilitator 2c | 93 | 1.55 | .560 |

Participants were most satisfied with the knowledge and effectiveness of the facilitator and co-facilitator's presentation. The participants were least satisfied with the facilitator and co-facilitator's respectfulness and courtesy

Differences between males and females (families)

- No significant differences were found between male and female family members in terms of their satisfaction levels with the conferences.
(Mann Whitney U test)
- There was a significant difference between males and females in terms of their perception on the knowledge and effectiveness of facilitator 1.
(Mann Whitney U Test $U=1651.5$, $p= .082$).
Males tend to be less satisfied than females (male mean=1.77 ; female mean=1.61)

Differences in age groups (families)

- Based on a Kruskal-Wallis test, significant differences were found for the different age groups in terms of the following:
 - *Ability to present point of view* (chi square=14.04, p value=.050, mean for least satisfied=1.83 (ages 11-20) and most satisfied=1.25(ages 61-70))
 - *Adequate protection for children* (chi square=20.62, p value=.004, mean for least satisfied=2.19 (ages 51-60) and most satisfied=1.23 (ages 41-50))
 - *Address all concerns* (chi square=22.48, p value=.002, mean for least satisfied=2.47 (ages 51-60) and most satisfied=1.38 (ages 41-50))

Satisfaction of Service Providers

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|---------------------------|----|------|-----------|
| Given Info | 96 | 1.65 | .680 |
| More effective than court | 81 | 1.74 | .883 |
| Facility satisfactory | 95 | 1.49 | .543 |
| Point of view | 94 | 1.44 | .560 |
| Adequate protection | 85 | 1.64 | .614 |
| Faster than court | 82 | 1.55 | .705 |

From this table, it is clear that service providers were most satisfied with being able to express their point of view and they were least satisfied with the conferences being more effective than court.

Satisfaction of service providers with facilitators

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. |
|----------------|----|------|-----------|
| Facilitator 1a | 91 | 1.52 | .545 |
| Facilitator 1b | 91 | 1.27 | .449 |
| Facilitator 1c | 91 | 1.41 | .537 |
| Facilitator 2a | 62 | 1.39 | .491 |
| Facilitator 2b | 59 | 1.32 | .471 |
| Facilitator 2c | 59 | 1.42 | .532 |

Service providers were most satisfied with facilitator and co-facilitator's ability to be respectful and courteous to participants. Service providers were least satisfied with the facilitator's knowledge and effectiveness in their presentation and with the co-facilitator's ability to remain neutral at all times.

Differences in Terms of Roles and Years in Profession

- Based on a Kruskal Wallis test, significant differences were found for the roles in terms of the following:
 - *Given enough information* (chi-square=5.99, $p = .050$, mean for least satisfied=1.89 (other represents another type of service provider not therapist, social worker or school personnel) and most satisfied=1.49 (social worker)).
- Based on a Kruskal Wallis test, significant differences were found for the number of years in profession in terms of the following:
 - *The facility was satisfactory* (chi-square=7.906, $p = .048$, mean for the least satisfied=1.62 (11 or more years) and most satisfied=1.25 (3-5 years)).

Conclusions

- It was concluded that families and service providers were overall satisfied with the FGDM conferences.
- 94.8% of the service providers said that they would recommend FGDM to others.
- 80.6% of family members said that they would recommend FGDM to others.
- Families were least satisfied with feeling unfairly pressured to come to an agreement, but felt satisfied with the location of the conferences.
- Overall male participants felt the facilitators knowledge and effectiveness in their presentation was not as favorable as the females perception of the presentations.
- Service providers were most satisfied with facilitator and co-facilitator's ability to be respectful and courteous to participants. Service providers were least satisfied with the facilitator's knowledge and effectiveness in their presentation and with the co-facilitator's ability to remain neutral at all times.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Facilitators could try other approaches to coming to a unified agreement, so participants do not feel pressured.
- Facilitators should work on alternate ways to be respectful and courteous to all participants.
- Brochures or hand-outs need to be given to all service providers so they understand how the conferences work.
- Facilitators could seek other alternatives on locations of the conferences to meet all participants needs.

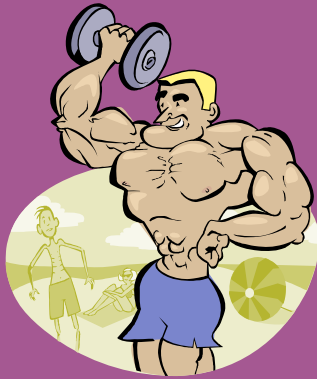
Qualitative Study

- Research Question:
 - In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of FGDM?
- **Six semi-structured interviews were completed with those who have made a referral to FGDM.**
 - Of the referral sources that were interviewed four were females and two were males. Their roles at the Cabinet for Families and Children (CFC) were two Court Support workers, three On-going workers, and one Intake and Investigative worker
 - Ages of the referral sources ranged from 24-62
 - Their number of years of service with CFC ranges from 1-7.5
 - The number of referrals made ranged from 1-6

Common Themes

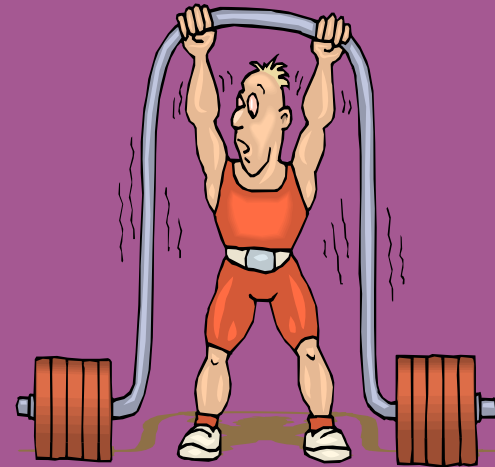
- **Common Strengths:**

- Conference participants are allowed to voice their thoughts and opinions
- Family has decision making ability over their family plan.
- FGDM conferences list the families strengths.
- FGDM conferences bring families together



- **Common Weaknesses:**

- Not able to get professionals to attend the FGDM conferences.



Other Strengths and Weaknesses of FGDM

• Strengths:

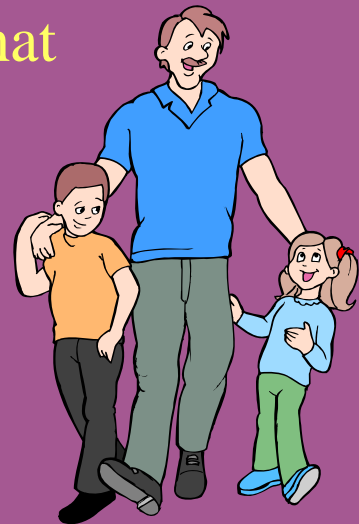
- Holds the family accountable
- FGDM does not harp on the families weaknesses.
- Makes the family feel like they have some power over decision making.
- FGDM conferences are a safe place to meet.
- The facilitator arranges everything for the FGDM meeting.
- Court loves FGDM.
- Provides a lot of time to discuss things that the family would like to discuss.
- Facilitators are able to schedule the FGDM conferences quickly
- Understands dynamics of families
- Peaceful approach

• Weaknesses:

- Sometimes it is hard to keep participants on task.
- Resources and their phone numbers need to be given to participants more often.
- Some family members can feel belittled due to what other family members have done.
- Sometimes there is a lack of cooperation by any FGDM participants.
- Try's to accommodate everyone in a timely manner.
- Sometimes facilitators will not schedule a FGDM conference if everyone that was invited does not agree to attend.

Conclusion

- Overall, FGDM referral sources that were interviewed gave many strengths about FGDM conferences.
- The weaknesses that were listed by referral sources that were interviewed can be easily overcome.
 - For example, facilitators could work on the following: keep participants on task, respect participants equally, give more information about community resources, and manage conflict among participants better so that everyone feels respected and heard.



Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

- Strengths of the study:

- Unused satisfaction surveys were finally analyzed to inform better practice.
- By conducting this research study, FGDM staff can learn how to improve their program.

- Weaknesses of the study:

- Age should have been a continuous variable and there should have been more service provider's roles specified on the survey.
- More referral sources for the qualitative study could have been interviewed.

For future research studies, the researcher could do a study to see if the FGDM conferences prevented families from getting new Child Protective Service referrals.